

Corbin Bridge
2 miles SE of Huntingdon
on road to Raystown Dam
Huntingdon Vicinity
Huntingdon County
Pennsylvania

HAER No. PA-248

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PA,
31-HUDD.V,
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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

CORBIN BRIDGE

HAER No. PA-248

Location: 2 miles SE of Huntingdon on road to Raystown Dam, Huntingdon Vicinity, Huntingdon County, Pennsylvania

Date of Construction: 1937

Builder: Reading Steel Products, Inc., fabricators
Roebbling & Son of Trenton, New Jersey, manufactured prestressed wire rope cables

Present Owner: Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT)

Present Use: vehicular bridge

Significance: This suspension bridge was constructed to replace a bridge swept away in the 1936 St. Patrick's Day flood. It is the only suspension bridge in the six-county Pennsylvania Department of Transportation district which includes Huntingdon.

Project Information: In February 1987, the Historic American Engineering Record (HAER) and the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) began a multi-year historical and architectural documentation project in southwestern Pennsylvania. Carried out in conjunction with America's Industrial Heritage Project (AIHP), HAER undertook a comprehensive inventory of Blair and Cambria counties as the first step in identifying the region's surviving historic engineering works and industrial resources.

The results of this project have been published in Huntingdon County, Pennsylvania: An Inventory of Historic Engineering and Industrial Sites, (1991), by Nancy Shedd, Sarah Heald, editor and published by HABS/HAER for the National Park Service.

Compiler: Nancy Shedd and Ken Heineman, Historians
Gray Fitzsimons and Kenneth Rose, Editors

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History:

DESCRIPTION: Located on the Raystown Branch, one-half mile south of its junction with the main current of the Juniata River, this one-lane, single-span, lightweight suspension bridge is 320' long, and 12.5' wide. Its main cables measure 2-3/8" in diameter. The prestressed wire rope cables, manufactured by Roebling & Son of Trenton, New Jersey, are supported on 39'-tall steel towers and anchored in concrete deadmen. The bridge is stiffened by a double intersecting Warren truss and has a macadam-paved wood deck. High cut-stone and concrete abutments with wing walls support fill at the bridge approaches.

HISTORY: This suspension bridge, also called the Corbin Bridge, was constructed in 1937 to replace a bridge swept away when a Penelec hydro-electric dam on the Raystown Branch gave way in the 1936 St. Patrick's Day flood. County bridge records state that the suspension bridge was fabricated by Reading Steel Products, Inc. The bridge type is highly unusual for the area -- it is the only suspension bridge in the six-county Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) district which includes Huntingdon.

Designed to carry a live load of 10 tons, the live load limit of the bridge was reduced to 7 tons in 1972 when a deck replacement project increased the dead load of the bridge itself. Serving one farm, a few year-round residences, and a cluster of vacation cottages along the Juniata, the bridge carries only a moderate amount of traffic and is not usually subjected to heavy loads. However, according to a recent inspection report, an excessive load in 1980 buckled the east truss, causing the weight limit to be set temporarily at 3 tons. Repair of the truss in 1981 permitted the 7-ton limit to be restored.

Sources:

Davis, J. Dain, PennDOT. Interview by author, 26 August 1988.

Bridge File No. 20, Huntingdon County Bridge Office. Huntingdon County Courthouse.

Souvenir Historical Book, Sesqui-Centennial Celebration of Huntingdon County Pennsylvania. Huntingdon County Historical Society, 1937.